

Unit-03 Introduction to the Internet, email and Social Media

Navigating the web and search engines.

Information is available in many different forms in the internet. To access the information that we need and to navigate through the internet, search engines act as tools. Search engine is a specialized program that facilitates information retrieval from large segments of the internet. It attempts to help a user locate desired information or resources by seeking matches to user-specified key words. The search engine performs keyword searches against the database and retrieves a set of web pages matching the query. It is a giant database of many web sites on the Internet. It generally returns the result of a search ranked by 'that search engines' indexing criteria. This formula varies widely between search engines.

- **Components of a search engine**

The main components of a search engine are:

1. **Gatherer:** Gatherer or Crawler or Spider gathers content descriptors from the document collection, which continuously traverses the Web and picks up the newly added WebPages/documents.
2. **Indexer:** Indexes the web pages gathered by the spider and build the database.
3. **Search Interface:** It is an interface between user and database. It collects query (Keywords) from the user, submit to the Database and display results based on the matching and relevance.

- **Types of search engines**

1. **Free-Text Search Engines:** Free text search engines accept any terms the user wishes to search for. It can search for terms in any combination and can search for phrase as well as single words.
2. **Index or Directory-based Search Engines:** In index or directory-based search engines, web authors (human made) submit pages to the search engine. Index-based search engines make use of heading and sub heading and arrange data in a structured fashion.
3. **Multi or Meta-Search Engines:** A meta-search engine translates the search request, then sends queries to all the relevant search engines,

processes the results, and then gives the best possible sites as output of the search result. Unlike the individual search engines and directories, meta-search engines do not have their own databases.

4. Natural-Language Search Engines: A natural language search engine is a search engine which interprets the question put forward by the user and displays output/answers of the question accordingly. The answer does not necessarily depend on the keywords or phrases, but rather on the interpretation of the question.

5. Resource or site specific Search Engines: These kind of search engines search a particular resource, like dictionary, encyclopedia, etc.

- **Search strategies**

Adopting basic search strategies that are specific and focused result in better and enhanced search outcomes. The basic search strategies are

1. Keyword searching: This type of search allows the searcher to enter or one or more terms that represent a concept to search.

2. Keyword Phrase Search: Enclose a phrase or words in double quotations (" ") when exact word order is required. This type of search is one of the most efficient and effective ways to narrow down results. Using this type of search finds sites, titles, and names when all or exact parts are known.

3. Implied Boolean Search: Use a plus (+) before a word or phrase that is to be included in a site, title, and/or document. Using a minus (-) in front of a word or phrase excludes these concepts from the site, title, and/or document. This type of search retrieves fewer results.

4. Wild card and truncation: Use an asterisk (*) or question mark (?) to indicate missing letters if you are uncertain of the spelling or want a variant spelling of the word(s).

- **Email**

Email or electronic mail is a method of communication that transmits information using the internet. It is a common part of education, business and commerce interactions. Emails can also be used for personal interactions.

- **Benefits of sending emails**

1. **Cost effective:** In case one uses a website that offers free email service, emails are usually free and cost effective, provided one has access to internet connectivity.
2. **Flexible:** Email can be accessed from any location and device like computer, mobile, laptop, etc., provided it has proper internet connectivity.
3. **Paperless:** The practice of receiving and sending emails is ecologically friendly as it prevents the use of papers.

- **Creating and managing email account**

How to create an email account?

Step 1: Visit a website that offers an email service. For example, yahoo, google, outlook, etc.

Step 2: Find where to sign up. Usually there is a link showing ‘register’ or ‘sign up’.

Step 3: Follow all the instructions on the page. Enter the necessary details. Select a proper handle for yourself.

Step 4: Read the service agreement and click on the box that says you agree to abide by the email system’s rules. Once completed, click on the ‘submit’ or ‘enter’ button usually at the bottom of the screen.

Step 5: Once all the steps are followed, your email account will be created successfully.

- **Managing email accounts**

What is email management?

Email management refers to the practice of organizing, prioritizing, and handling emails in a way that optimizes productivity and efficiency. It involves strategies for managing incoming emails, responding promptly, and organizing email archives for easy retrieval.

Ways of email management:

1. Create labels, folders, and categories: An easy way to organize emails is by creating labels and folders and sorting them accordingly. Storing emails in folders keeps them out of main inbox. Creating labels however does not keep the emails out of main inbox, however, it helps in categorizing emails. Typing the name of a particular label displays all the emails under that label.

2. Star or flag important emails: It is always a good practice to star the important emails so that they can be easily accessed whenever needed by simply clicking on 'starred' emails.

3. Set up filters in your email account: Applying filters can help you manage new emails as they come in. Filters are rules you can apply to incoming messages that will automatically send them to the correct folder, add the correct label, archive, or delete them.

4. Unsubscribe from unimportant sites: A very important step of clearing the clutter from email inbox is by unsubscribing from sites that keep sending unnecessary advertisements. This step helps in clearing a large amount of junk from the email inbox.

5. Use your calendar to track emails that require follow ups: Some emails might require follow up action. It is always better to add a reminder in the calendar.

6. Create templates for your go-to responses: In case you have to reply to emails with similar responses, it is always better to create templates that can be readily sent.

7. Follow the four D's: 4 D's of email management:

Delete: Delete unimportant or unnecessary emails immediately

Delegate: Assign emails that can be handled by someone else to the appropriate person.

Do: Respond to emails that require immediate action.

Defer: Postpone dealing with emails that require more time or consideration to a later time.

- **Composing and sending emails**

Step 1: First of all, sign in to your email id and click on the 'compose' or 'compose mail' option. A new window appears on the screen.

Step 2: Carefully type the recipients' email addresses in the 'To' section of the email. The next two slots after 'To' section is usually the 'Cc' or the carbon copy section and the 'Bcc' or the blind carbon copy section. These are parts of the composition window where you can include other people without sending the email to them directly. This can communicate to them that you want them to know about the interaction, but you may not expect a response. A blind carbon copy doesn't inform the other people in the email that you shared it with others.

Step 3: Write a subject for your email: A subject line is a brief explanation for what the email is. This helps the recipient quickly identify the purpose of the communication and can help them prioritize it. Effective subjects prompt the recipient to open and read, so it's important to write one that properly communicates the purpose of the email.

Step 4: Compose the body of your message: While composing the body of an email, it is necessary to follow the basic email etiquettes. In case the email is for professional reasons, make sure to keep the message short, precise and clear. For personal communication, format the message in several paragraphs for clarity and precision.

Step 5: In case there are files that you need to send the receiver, attach the necessary files in the email. It is usually a button with a paperclip icon [insert icon picture], and when you select it you can choose the image or document you want to include.

Step 6: Proof read the email: Thoroughly check the recipients' email addresses in the 'To', 'Cc', and 'Bcc' section, subject, content of the email. Check if the necessary attachments have been made. After proof reading the entire email, press the send button.

Email etiquette and best practices.

Email etiquette is a set of socially accepted norms that are to be followed while communicating through email. Based on the person/group receiving the email, the etiquettes will be different.

- **Why is email etiquette important?**

Following email etiquettes is considered as one of the best practices that must be followed while communicating through emails. The reasons why email etiquette is important is enlisted herein

1. It increases clarity of the message that is to be delivered through email.
2. It brings efficiency. Following email etiquettes aides in making the message precise and focussed, thereby saving time on part of both the sender and the reader.
3. Following email etiquette helps in protection from legal liability.

- **Email etiquettes**

1. **Use a direct subject line:** Subject lines should be brief and to the point.

2. **Use a professional email address:** Emails are mostly used for formal communication. Hence, always be careful while choosing a handle for your email. In case you are sending an email on behalf of your company, it is always better to have a handle with the company's name or abbreviated name of the company.

3. Add a professional email signature

4. **Use professional greetings:** Always avoid casual greetings like 'Hi there' and 'Hey everyone'. Always keep the greetings formal.

5. **Avoid use of excessive exclamation points:** Using too many exclamation marks in email gives the reader a sense of excitement on part of the sender. This makes it very inappropriate for formal messages.

6. **Always proof read before sending an email:** An email once sent cannot be undone in most of the cases. So always proof read the message before pressing the send button.

7. **Always be careful while typing the recipient's address:** Special care should be taken while typing the sender's email address. Emails being delivered to the wrong person may result in leak of sensitive information or important documents of the company.

8. **Keep the message clear:** The basic difference between a letter and email is that a letter allows having extra information, in addition to the main message whereas a proper email has just the message, which should be represented in as short and clear way as possible.

• Introduction to social media platforms

What is social media?

Social media is digital technology that allows the sharing of ideas and information, including text and visuals, through virtual networks and communities.

Social media typically features user-generated content that lends itself to engagement via likes, shares, comments, and discussion.

Some common social media platforms are Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Linked in, Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, YouTube, etc.

Advantages and disadvantages of social media platforms.

Advantages

1. Enhanced Communication: Social media platforms facilitate instant communication, regardless of geographical barriers. Users can stay in touch, share updates, and engage in real time communication.

2. Information sharing and discovery: Social media platforms serve as valuable sources of news, information, and educational content. Users can access a diverse range of topics and perspectives, staying informed about current events, trends, and developments.

3. Community building: Users can create communities based on shared interests and hobbies, where they can connect with like minded individuals, join groups, and participate in discussions and activities.

4. Networking opportunities: Social Media platforms, particularly professional networks like LinkedIn, offer valuable networking opportunities for career development and business growth. Users can connect with industry professionals, explore job opportunities, and showcase their skills and expertise.

5. Marketing and Promotion: Businesses and organizations use social media platforms for marketing and promotion, reaching a large and diverse audience. Social media marketing allows for target advertising, brand building, and customer engagement, thereby driving sales.

6. Global Reach: Social media platforms have global reach, enabling individuals and businesses to connect with audiences worldwide. This global presence opens up opportunities for cross-cultural exchange, collaboration, and international expansion.

Disadvantages

1. Privacy concerns: Social Media platforms raise significant privacy concerns, as users' personal information and online activities may be collected, stored, and shared without their consent. This can lead to identity theft, data breaches, and invasive advertising practices.

2. Misinformation and fake news: Social media platforms are susceptible to spread of misinformation, fake news, and rumours. False or misleading information can quickly go viral, leading to confusion, distrust, and social unrest.

3. Cyber bullying and harassment: Social media platforms are often used as vehicles for cyberbullying, harassment, and online abuse. Users may experience cyberbullying, hate speech, or trolling, leading to psychological distress and negative mental health outcomes.

4. Addiction and distraction: Excessive use of social media can lead to addiction, as users may become reliant on constant validation and feedback from likes, comments, and shares. Social media addiction can also contribute to procrastination, time wasting and decreased productivity.

5. Filter Bubbles and Echo Chambers: Social media algorithms may create filter bubbles and echo chambers, where users are exposed to content that reinforces their existing beliefs and biases. This can lead to polarization, ideological extremism, and a lack of exposure to diverse perspectives.

6. Impact on mental health: Prolonged use of social media has been linked to anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Excessive comparison, cyberbullying, and social isolation are some factors that can negatively impact users' mental well-being.

- **Privacy and security settings of social media platforms:**

Privacy and security settings on social media platforms are crucial for safeguarding personal information and maintaining control over who can access and interact with our content. Each platform offers various privacy and security features that users can customize to suit their preferences and needs.

1. Profile Privacy Settings: Social media platforms allow users to control the visibility of their profile information, such as their name, profile picture, bio, and contact details. Users can choose between public, private, or custom settings to determine who can view their profile.

2. Post Privacy Settings: Users can also specify the audience for their posts by choosing from options such as public, friends only, or custom.

3. Audience Restrictions: Some platforms allow users to limit the visibility of their content to specific audiences. This can help prevent unwanted access to sensitive information.

4. Blocking and muting: Users can block or mute other users to prevent them from viewing their profile, contacting them, or interacting with their content.

5. Two factor authentication: Many social media platforms offer two-factor authentication as an additional layer of security. Users can enable 2FA to require a second form of verification in which a code is sent to their phones or emails, when someone tries to log in to their profiles.

6. Login alerts and activity monitoring: Some platforms provide features to monitor account activity so that users can review login history, active sessions, and devices logged onto their accounts to identify any unauthorized access.

7. Data Access and Permissions: Social media platforms allow users to control the access and permissions granted to third party apps and services connected to their account. Users can review and manage the data shared with these apps and revoke access if necessary.

8. Privacy policy and settings update: By using these privacy and security settings, users can take proactive steps to protect their personal information, control their online presence, and mitigate potential risks associated with using social media platforms.

- **Creating and managing social media accounts**

1. Choose the right platform: Research and identify the social media platforms that align with your goals, target audience, and content type.

2. Create account: Visit the website or download the app of the chosen social media platform. Follow the prompts to create a new account, providing necessary information such as name, email address, username, and password.

3. Complete profile: Once your account is created, complete your profile by adding the necessary information.

4. Customize settings: Explore the privacy and security settings of your account to customize your profile visibility, post privacy, notifications, etc.

5. Develop content strategy: For business and marketing through social media, define your content strategy based on your goals, target audience, and brand identity.

6. Create and share content: Start creating and sharing content that resonates with your audience and aligns with your brand message.

- **Posting and sharing content in social media**

Posting and sharing content on social media refers to the act of creating and distributing various types of content, such as text, images, videos, links, and articles, on social media platforms.

Posting and sharing content in social media platforms play a crucial role in communication, information dissemination, content discovery, and community building.

To effectively post and share content on social media:

- 1. Understand audience:** Before posting content, it is crucial to understand target audience's interests. Tailor content to resonate with your audience.

- 2. Develop content strategy:** Define content strategy based on goals, brand identity, and audience insights.

- 3. Optimize content for each platform:** Tailor content for each social media platform's unique format and audience expectations.

- 4. Share User-Generated Content (UGC):** In case of business and marketing, repost and share contents from satisfied customers, or influencers who endorse your brands.

- 5. Monitor and analyze performance:** Track the performance of posts and content using built-in analytics tools provided by social media platforms.